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# CITY OF SAINT PAUL

Christopher B. Coleman, Mayor

25 West Fourth Street Saint Paul, MN 55102

DATE: May 4, 2011

TO: Comprehensive Planning Committee

FROM: Donna Drummond, Planning Staff

RE: Neighborhood STAR Applications: Comments Regarding Conformance with the

**Comprehensive Plan** 

Draft Comments to CIB Committee and Neighborhood STAR Board regarding

**Capital Improvement Priorities** 

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## <u>Introduction</u>

On April 1, 2011 the Planning Commission approved a set of comments to be sent to the CIB Committee regarding Comprehensive Plan conformance for current CIB proposals under review. The Planning Commission is being asked to do the same for Neighborhood STAR (Sales Tax Revitalization) Program applications that are currently under review by the Neighborhood STAR Board. During the discussion of the CIB proposal comments, several commissioners expressed an interest in providing more general comments regarding funding priorities as guided by the Comprehensive Plan. Draft comments regarding STAR applications and overall capital improvement priorities are attached for your consideration.

# **Neighborhood STAR Applications**

Twenty-two (22) applications were submitted, requesting over \$2.9 million in funding. The average dollar request is \$133,369. Over \$3.9 million in potential matching funds have been identified.

- 13 applications requesting grant-only funds
- 12 applications for commercial improvement projects
- 3 applications for public park or playground enhancements
- 3 applications for housing or mixed-use development projects
- 4 applications for loan or grant programs for commercial or residential improvements

A spreadsheet of draft comments evaluating these applications as to Comprehensive Plan conformance is attached for your review. If you'd like more information, copies of each application will be posted online under the May 10<sup>th</sup> meeting on the Comprehensive Planning Committee page – <a href="https://www.stpaul.gov/ped">www.stpaul.gov/ped</a>, click on Planning, then Comprehensive Planning Committee.

#### **Capital Improvement Priorities**

Attached are general comments regarding capital improvement priorities for the Committee's consideration. If recommended by the Committee and approved by the Planning Commission, these comments would be sent to the CIB Committee and Neighborhood STAR Board for their consideration. The CIB Committee is scheduled to finalize its recommendations on June 13<sup>th</sup> and the Neighborhood STAR Board will finalize its recommendations on June 6<sup>th</sup>. As you may know, the CIB Committee relies on recommendations from three task forces. These task forces have completed their recommendations, which can be found at <a href="http://www.stpaul.gov/index.aspx?NID=217">http://www.stpaul.gov/index.aspx?NID=217</a>

Please feel free to contact me with questions prior to the Committee meeting on May10th (651-266-6556 or donna.drummond@ci.stpaul.mn.us.

# <u>Draft Planning Commission Comments to CIB Committee and Neighborhood STAR Board</u> regarding Capital Improvement Priorities

(to be put on Planning Commission letterhead and signed by Chair Commers)

The Planning Commission has provided comments regarding Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan conformance for the applications you are currently considering for either the Neighborhood STAR program or Capital Improvement Budget process. The Comprehensive Plan identifies tools for its implementation. Among the important financial tools specifically identified are the Capital Improvement Budget and the STAR program. We would like to take this opportunity to highlight for you certain high priorities for action that are identified in the Implementation section of the Comprehensive Plan (pp. 1-3, Implementation, *Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan*, adopted Feb. 24, 2010 – http://stpaul.gov/index.aspx?NID=3427).

#### **High Priorities for Action**

Certain imperatives stand out for implementation of the *Saint Paul Comprehensive Plan*, high priorities for action without which Saint Paul's potential cannot be realized. These high priorities are also important for the city's ability to be an effective collaborator in the region.

#### Provide housing choices for everyone.

As Saint Paul's demographics change, particularly as the numbers of couples without children, empty nesters, and large immigrant families increase, it is critical to have a diverse housing stock in mixed income communities. Strengthen neighborhoods hurt by mortgage foreclosures. Foreclosures and the vacant houses they produce make families more vulnerable and jeopardize the future of affected communities.

# Capitalize on the potential of the Central Corridor.

The construction of light rail transit in the Central Corridor provides opportunities for the city to realize its potential as a complex, sophisticated urban center with denser housing and employment centers. Lay the foundation for more jobs that pay a living wage. The City and its development partners must provide for land, cleaned of contamination from decades ago and with the infrastructure needed for the information-based economy, so that businesses are able to establish themselves and grow and provide jobs with a living wage.

## Maintain public infrastructure and facilities.

Saint Paul has a sizeable investment in facilities and infrastructure — streets, utilities, parks and recreation centers, and libraries are examples. For the city to remain vibrant and be a vigorous urban center, these must be well maintained to extend their useful life.

#### Secure an expanded transit system.

Saint Paul needs a transit system that provides more frequent service and more routes, particularly through parts of the city that are not well served. There are greater numbers of transit dependent people living in the city and the cost of energy is making vehicular travel too expensive.

#### Pursue projects and programs to reduce the carbon footprint.

Although reducing the carbon footprint involves global and national strategies, the City can contribute to the effort by managing development activities so that buildings are constructed to reduce the amount of energy used during their operation. Moreover, the City can encourage residents and employees to reduce their use of vehicles and to rely more on transit in order to reduce the emissions that contribute to global warming.

# Provide opportunities that enrich residents' lives.

Schools, parks and recreation centers, and libraries all create avenues for people of all age groups to pursue interests and desires for learning, for play, and for participation in the community.

# Protect cultural and historic resources.

Cultural and historic resources enhance the lives of Saint Paul residents and visitors by defining the character of the city and creating a strong link to its rich past. Protecting these resources through the use

of historic preservation tools will minimize such threats as lack of maintenance, development pressures, and challenges to finding appropriate uses for contemporary times.

#### Protect natural resources.

The Mississippi River runs through Saint Paul and is the most obvious natural resource in the city. There are also lakes (i.e., Como, Phalen, and Beaver) as well as dozens of parks, thousands of boulevard trees, and miles of trails. All contribute to the ecology of the city and to enriching the lives of residents.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments. Please feel free to contact Donna Drummond, Director of Planning in the Department of Planning and Economic Development, if you have questions or need more information about the City's Comprehensive Plan (651-266-6556, donna.drummond@ci.stpaul.mn.us).